

BIRD MIGRATION RECORDS IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

BY W. J. BAERG

Several lists of birds of Arkansas and of parts of Arkansas have been published, but so far as I know there are no available records of the dates of the arrival and departure of our migratory birds. Such information seemed essential for a course in Ornithology offered at the University, and for this reason, primarily, an attempt was made to observe the arrival and departure of the migratory birds.

The work was begun in 1924, so that by this time a five-year record* may be presented. The dates given for the arrival of the summer residents, winter residents, and also the transients are, I think, for the most part accurate, or nearly so. The dates of the departure of the winter residents are likewise fairly accurate. However, the departure of the summer residents is not easily ascertained and the dates are, therefore, at best somewhere near the truth.

In a few instances the field trips had to be postponed on account of sickness of the observer, or on account of some other unfavorable circumstance, with the result that exact dates of the arrival of a few species were not secured. These instances, where the observer failed to observe the first arrivals, have been indicated in the table.

The records were obtained on field trips taken during the height of migration (March, April, and May), three or four times a week; during the remainder of the year, about once a week. The route followed was planned so that it includes all the different type localities available in this part of the state. These are: outskirts of the town, hawthorn-smilax thickets, dry oak woods, tall elm and sycamore timber, rivulets and small streams, fields, and meadows. On these trips the distance varied between six and ten miles. The route is changed somewhat in order to have it include one or several favorite haunts of the less common birds at the time of their expected arrival. In addition, special trips are made to localities farther away, in order to widen the range of observation.

The region in which these observations were made is hill country with an altitude of about 1450 feet. There are no large rivers, but a number of small streams that continue to flow even through very dry summers. On the hillsides are numerous springs that attract birds. An abundance of hawthorn, smilax, buckbrush, and wild grape in the extensive woodland areas serves to bring in a large number of winter residents.

*Mr. Frank Smith, student assistant, has made many of the observations recorded in this paper.

MIGRATION RECORDS

NAME	1924		1925		1926		1927		1928	
	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard
Bittern			March 27	April 5					March 20	April 4
Great blue heron			March 29		April 18				April 3	Sept. 16
Green heron			April 11	Sept. 3	April 21	Sept. 19	May 8	Oct. 28	May 1	
Woodcock (1)	March 22									
Wilson's snipe (2)	April 4		March 25	April 4	March 28				March 23	
Sharp-shinned hawk					Oct. 9 (1925)	April 10			Oct. 16 (1927)	April 28
Yellow-billed cuckoo	May 18		May 10	Sept. 22	May 1	Sept. 6	May 21	Sept. 25	May 13	Oct. 7
Black-billed cuckoo	May 17		May 17		April 30				May 16	
Yellow-bellied sapsucker			Dec. 7 (1924)	April 1	Dec. 26 (1925)		Nov. 27 (1926)	Feb. 26		Feb. 28
Chuck-will's widow	April 15		April 14	July 28	April 24	July 18	April 16		April 17	July 20
Whip-poor-will			April 14	April 16	April 17					
Nighthawk							May 11	Oct. 2	May 16	Sept. 30
Chimney swift	April 9		April 5	Oct. 1	April 3	Oct. 4	April 2	Oct. 11	April 2	Oct. 17
Ruby-throated hummingbird					May 2		April 17	Oct. 1	April 29	Oct. 6
Crested flycatcher	April 24		April 20		April 23	Sept. 9	April 18	Sept. 9	April 17	Sept. 2
Phoebe (3)	March 28	Oct. 12	March 8	Oct. 18	March 18	Oct. 8	March 6	Oct. 2	March 11	Oct. 14
Wood pewee	April 27		May 3	Aug. 27	April 28	Oct. 3	April 19	Sept. 11	April 30	Sept. 16
Acadian flycatcher	May 16		April 26	July 26	May 2	July 31	May 1	Aug. 11	May 1	Aug. 28
Least flycatcher							May 1	June 26	May 1	May 19
Bobolink			May 11		May 23		May 13	May 18	May 18	
Cowbird (4)			March 22	Sept. 16	March 18		March 19		March 18	Sept. 11
Orchard oriole	April 25		April 23		April 29	Aug. 22	April 21	Aug. 5	April 18	Aug. 27

NAME	1924		1925		1926		1927		1928	
	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard
Baltimore oriole (4a)	April 25	May 2	April 23	May 11	April 30	May 22	April 24	May 21	April 27	May 13
Rusty blackbird		April 6	Nov. 23 (1924)	March 27	Nov. 8 (1925)	April 3	Oct. 31 (1926)	March 27		April 1
Purple finch	March 22	April 18	Jan. 31	April 13	Nov. 29 (1925)	April 24	Feb. 26	April 3	Oct. 28 (1927)	April 11
Vesper sparrow			March 20	April 10	March 28	April 8	March 15	April 1	March 14	March 23
Lark sparrow (8)	April 20		April 9	July 11	April 17	July 26	April 11	July 20	April 24	July 16
Harris' sparrow		April 4	Nov. 16 (1924)	April 21	Oct. 25 (1925)	May 2	Nov. 5 (1926)	April 30	Oct. 28 (1927)	April 28
White-crowned sparrow		May 2	Oct. 19 (1924)	May 10	Oct. 12 (1925)	May 16	Oct. 8 (1926)	May 11	Oct. 16 (1927)	May 10
White-throated sparrow		May 16	Oct. 26 (1924)	May 10	Oct. 12 (1925)	May 7	Oct. 12 (1926)	May 8	Oct. 16 (1927)	May 13
Tree sparrow			Oct. 19 (1924)	April 3	Oct. 18 (1925)	March 21	Nov. 28 (1926)	March 27	Oct. 30 (1927)	
Chipping sparrow	March 27		March 17	Sept. 13	March 23	Oct. 22	March 17		March 12	Oct. 13
Field sparrow (5)			Feb. 6		Feb. 18		Feb. 26		Feb. 28	
Slate-colored junco		April 6	Oct. 19 (1924)	April 7	Oct. 18 (1925)	April 9	Oct. 22		Oct. 16 (1927)	April 11
Song sparrow		March 30	Oct. 19 (1924)	April 5	Oct. 18 (1925)	April 10	Oct. 15 (1926)	April 30	Oct. 19 (1927)	April 28
Lincoln's sparrow (6)			Feb. 25	May 17				May 4	Oct. 16 (1927)	April 28
Fox sparrow		April 5	Nov. 30 (1924)	April 7	Oct. 18 (1925)	April 9	Oct. 31 (1926)	March 13	Oct. 19 (1927)	April 11
Towhee (5)			Feb. 25		Feb. 18		March 6		March 3	
Rose-breasted grosbeak	May 9		May 12		May 2		April 30	May 17	May 2	May 6
Blue grosbeak	May 2		April 26	Aug. 27	April 30	Sept. 12	April 30	Sept. 4	May 6	Sept. 12

NAME	1924		1925		1926		1927		1928	
	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard
Indigo bunting	May 3		May 2	Sept. 17	April 26	Sept. 19	April 24	Sept. 27	April 28	Sept. 2
Dickcissel	May 3		April 26	Aug. 11	April 30	July 31	April 27	Aug. 11	May 1	Aug. 29
Scarlet tanager (7)	May 2		April 23		April 21		April 26			
Summer tanager	April 27		April 23		April 24	Oct. 12	April 20	Oct. 9	April 21	Oct. 14
Purple martin			March 13		March 22	Aug. 26	March 18		March 19	Aug. 27
Rough-winged swallow			May 6		April 29		April 10		May 1	
Red-eyed vireo	April 25		April 17	Aug. 20	April 18	Aug. 29	April 15	Sept. 11	April 17	Sept. 16
Warbling vireo			April 24	May 20	April 28	May 16	April 23	May 18	April 27	May 15
Yellow-throated vireo			April 7	Sept. 17	April 17	Sept. 19	April 10	Sept. 18	April 7	Sept. 16
White-eyed vireo	April 18		April 12	Sept. 17	April 18	Sept. 19	April 9	Sept. 25	April 8	Sept. 16
Bell's vireo	April 27		April 23	Sept. 3	May 7	Sept. 6	April 29	Sept. 4	May 1	Aug. 7
Black and white warbler	April 6		March 27	Sept. 11	April 2	Aug. 15	April 1		April 1	Sept. 16
Prothonotary warbler (8a)			April 19							
Blue-winged warbler (16)	April 18	June 27	April 14		April 18	June 25	April 10	June 21	April 28	June 30
Nashville warbler			April 23	May 11	April 30	May 14	April 8	May 7	April 25	May 10
Tennessee warbler	April 11		April 4	May 17	April 25	May 16	April 17	May 20	April 3	May 16
Parula warbler			April 1	July 26	April 9	Aug. 29	March 27	Sept. 18	April 1	July 25
Yellow warbler	April 20	June 27	April 17		April 17	July 16	April 15	June 19	Apr. 24 ⁽⁹⁾	Aug. 27
Myrtle warbler (10)		May 2	April 3	April 26	March 18	April 21	March 19	April 30	April 1	May 6
Magnolia warbler			May 7	May 11	May 14		May 8		May 13	
Sycamore warbler			April 5		April 9	July 10	March 27	July 4	March 28	July 14
Prairie warbler			April 5	Sept. 13	April 13		April 11	Sept. 12	Apr. 25 ⁽⁹⁾	Aug. 31
Ovenbird	April 18		April 17	Aug. 27	April 18	July 16	April 19		April 21	June 30
Louisiana water-thrush	March 28		March 27	Oct. 4	March 29	Oct. 3	March 27	Sept. 4	March 18	Sept. 29
Kentucky warbler			April 19	Aug. 20	April 30	Aug. 22	April 15	July 10	Apr. 25 ⁽⁹⁾	July 20
Maryland yellow-throat	April 18		April 12	July 26	April 18	Aug. 7	April 17	Oct. 2	Apr. 25 ⁽⁹⁾	Aug. 26

NAME	1924		1925		1926		1927		1928	
	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard	Date of arrival	Date last seen or heard
Yellow-breasted chat	April 25		April 19	July 26	April 23	Aug. 29	April 16	Aug. 18	April 25	July 23
Redstart	April 25		April 19	Sept. 11	April 18	Sept. 6	April 17		Apr. 24 ⁽⁹⁾	July 20
Pipit			Feb. 19	April 19	March 2	May 2	March 27	April 28		
Catbird	April 25	Oct. 12	April 20	Sept. 27	April 25	Sept. 30	April 18	Oct. 9	April 24	Oct. 7
Brown thrasher	March 28	Oct. 26	March 8	Sept. 27	March 21	Oct. 15	March 6	Oct. 19	March 13	Oct. 14
House wren (11)	April 18	May 2	April 16	May 17					April 22	April 28
Brown creeper		March 30		April 16	Nov. 26 (1925)	April 2		March 26	Nov. 11 (1927)	March 20
Golden-crowned kinglet (12)			March 12	April 3			March 12		Feb. 28	March 18
Ruby-crowned kinglet (13)	March 30		March 22	April 23	March 21	April 25	March 13	April 24	March 23	May 1
Blue-gray gnatcatcher	April 5		April 4		April 2	Sept. 9	March 27	Aug. 28	April 1	Sept. 2
Wood thrush			April 19	Aug. 20	April 26	Aug. 15	April 14	Aug. 28	April 21	Aug. 23
Gray-checked thrush (14)	May 2		May 1	May 6	May 7	May 14	April 30	May 22	May 1	May 6
Olive-backed thrush			April 21	May 26	April 30	May 21	April 22	May 27	April 22	May 12
Hermit thrush	April 6	April 11	March 25	April 12			April 3		March 18	
Robin (15)			Feb. 1		Jan. 30		Feb. 3		Feb. 5	

- (1) Seen on fall migration, November 11 and December 3, 1927; also on November 11, 1928.
- (2) Seen on fall migration, November 28, 1924; November 8, 1925.
- (3) Seen also on February 6, 1925.
- (4) One lonesome male was seen on October 31, 1928.
- (4a) Observed on fall migration, September 27, 1925.
- (5) Resident species.
- (6) Records are probably of fall and spring migration, not winter residence.
- (7) The scarlet tanager nests in small numbers on some of the Ozark hills, but not in the neighborhood of Fayetteville.
- (8) Heard singing in Inola, Okla., August 6, 1928.
- (8a) Nests commonly in various parts of Arkansas, but not in the neighborhood of Fayetteville.
- (9) Arrived probably earlier.
- (10) Seen in fall migration, October 19 to November 16, 1924; October 18 to November 1, 1925, etc.
- (11) Seen in fall migration, September 27, 1925.
- (12) Observed in fall migration, October 26 to November 23, 1924; and on October 15, 1926.
- (13) Observed on fall migration, October 12 to November 16, 1924.
- (14) Seen once on December 29, 1927.
- (15) Resident species.
- (16) Only one pair of these warblers was under observation. The dates under "last seen or heard" are really for the end of the song period. On June 30, 1928, one was observed with a large caterpillar in its bill. In a general way all this applies also to other warblers, such as the ovenbird, Maryland yellowthroat, Sycamore warbler, yellow-breasted chat, and redbird. They are not often seen after their song period is over.

It requires but little experience to learn to recognize a new arrival. Some of these are so much in evidence, for instance the White-eyed Vireo and the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, that they are not easily overlooked. Some of the birds are, however, decidedly shy on their first appearance, for instance the Louisiana Water-thrush, Wood Thrush, Indigo Bunting, and some others. These require careful watching of the most favored haunts. Often the "distress call" will serve to bring forth one of these new arrivals that is too shy to make itself heard.

Some of the migratory birds, such as the Blue Jay, Towhee, Bluebird, Robin, Mockingbird, and Field Sparrow, are resident species and are common here both during summer and winter. If one may judge by the noise, the Blue Jay is more common here in winter than in summer. The dates of migration of these species can be no more than generally indicated.

Mourning Doves are commonly seen in flocks of ten or more, during the winter. Goldfinches occur here in flocks of a score or two in the winter, while Bronzed Grackles, as well as Red-winged Blackbirds, are commonly seen in flocks of a hundred or more. For these birds, dates of migration cannot be given with any degree of accuracy.

The Purple Finch occurs here during the winter. In some years it appears to be fairly common, in others it seems exceedingly scarce or totally absent. The dates of its observed arrival are, therefore irregular. The dates when the Purple Finches appear in considerable numbers and are much in evidence on account of their song are likewise irregular, varying from February 1 to March 28.

The Phoebe is rare here during the winter; hence, the dates of its arrival may be considered as fairly accurate.

Great Blue Herons and Egrets nest here, but are far from common. The observations on Egrets are omitted here; those of the Great Blue Herons are incomplete.

Some of the sparrows, such as the Swamp Sparrow and the Grasshopper Sparrow, were seen on various occasions in fall and early spring, but the records are not included. The Savannah Sparrow nests in this region, but no observations regarding its migration have been made.

The arrangement in the tables, under calendar years, is not suited to the winter birds. Since a separate table seems undesirable, I have placed the dates of their arrival under the year when the major portion of the residence time comes.

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